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FM AMEMBASSY BELIZE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9636
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS BELIZE 000117

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SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR WHA/CEN - JASON MACK
DEPT FOR WHA/PPC - MICHAEL PUCCETTI
DEPT FOR INL/GTIP - LINDA BROWN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [SOCI](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [BH](#)

SUBJECT: BELIZE: THREE AMCITS ACQUITTED OF TRAFFICKING

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) In October 2003, in the remote southern Belize town of Punta Gorda, three American citizens were charged with unlawful carnal knowledge and trafficking-in-persons. After over three years of postponed trials the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) dropped the cases against all three. One of the defendants has filed a malicious prosecution case against the Government of Belize (GOB).

A LONG STORY

¶2. (SBU) In October 2003 three American Citizens were charged with various crimes, most notably for unlawful carnal knowledge, of several children, and trafficking in persons. After 48 hours of incarceration they had not been charged by police and were released; however, Punta Gorda police retained their passports while continuing their investigation. Separately, the trio fled Belize and since 2003, the three - Harvey Lee Jones, Amos Capps and Dennis Bruce - would sporadically call the consular section inquiring about their cases. Each had stressed his innocence and desire to come back to Belize to face the charges at trial and clear their names.

¶3. (U) In a recent press interview, Jones relayed that even though he was not identified by any of the children, he could understand how Capps and Bruce may have demonstrated "suspicious behavior" to police saying, "they (Bruce and Capps) spent a lot of time around children." Jones had also revealed that in 2003 after he was released by police, who had retained his passport, he had to "flee" back to the U.S. for work reasons.

TURNED TABLES

¶4. (U) Jones, a research biologist who authored the book "Birds of Belize" published by Houston University Press, has filed a civil suit for "malicious prosecution" and "financial loss" against the GOB naming lead investigator Police Inspector Cardinal Smith as the focal point. In a recent press interview Jones went further to say that "(police) cannot continue to run roughshod over the citizens of Belize. They (police) go around and they threaten, intimidate, and rape women and children, false charges, aggressively pursuing people that are innocent, that they

know are innocent."

15. (SBU) Jones has retained the services of local attorney Michael Peyrefitte, an influential weekly columnist in the political opposition, El Guardian, newspaper.

DIETER